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MEMOIR

OF

JAMES BUCHANAN,

OF PENNSYLVANIA.

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MEMOIR

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JAMES BUCHANAN, OF PENNSYLVANIA.

The reputation of our public men constitutes an important element in the history of our country. It cannot be too far above reproach. The example of an upright statesman during his lifetime, is a source of pride and power to his countrymen, and a consoling and purifying remembrance after he has been gathered to his fathers. In James Buchanan we find a character without suspicion or stain. During forty years of active and almost constant service in high political positions, he has maintained the same tranquil deportment, the same scrupulous regard for the truth, the same dignified avoidance of corrupt compliances and combinations. The posterity of the friends among whom he spent his youth, are living around him; and the prophecies of those, who saw the promise of his early years, are recalled by their descendants, who rejoice in the maturity of his intellect, the sagacity of his statesmanship, and the long list of his public and private virtues, as the abundant fulfilment of the predictions of their fathers. Personal malignity has never yet inflicted dishonor upon his good name. Slander, exhaustless in its resources, and unsleeping in its vengeance, has failed in every attempt against him.

Men contemplate Mr. Buchanan, at this day, not as one whom envy and wrong have persecuted, but as a great public character, who has passed through the fiery furnace without the smell of smoke upon his garments, and who stands out ready to submit to the test of any scrutiny into his conduct as a citizen and a statesman. The day has come which is to prove that such talents as his, such experience, such integrity, such fixed habits of wise forecast, are essential to the great destiny for which he seems to have been reserved by his countrymen, who always demand the highest qualities of statesmanship in the highest position in their gift. Where, indeed, is there to be found a living public man, who presents so exemplary and so consistent a record, running through so many years?

Even among those who have departed the scene of human action, there were few who could point to a more unbroken series of services in defence of great principles. If we look down the gallery of the long gone past, and take up the portraits of the great actors of other days, how comparatively few there are who exhibited in their lives and in their works a more conscientious and high-souled devotion to the doctrines of the Federal Constitution and to the rights of the States of the American Union! The course of Mr. Buchanan has been neither erratic nor irregular; it has harmonized with the purest examples of the past and the present, and with all those saving doctrines which he has devotedly practised and defended; and whether in the House or in the Senate of the American Congress, whether immersed in foreign relations, whether at the head of the most important department of the government under the memorable administration of Polk, or whether reposing in the calm seclusion of his own home, his well-balanced intellect and his patriotic devotion to the Union, have always been displayed at the right moment, and with the most striking effect. Progressive, not in the spirit of lawlessness, but in harmony with the steady advance of our institutions on this continent, and our example among the nations of the earth; conservative, not in veneration for antiquated abuses, but in sacred regard for rights which cannot be violated without destroying the fundamental law; he fails in no single element of public usefulness, political orthodoxy, or personal character. Such is the impression made upon those who study the history, public and private, of James Buchanan; such the conclusive answer which the open and spotless volume of his career makes to all who have conceived it necessary to attack his eminent deservings and his lofty capacities.

Mr. Buchanan is in the sixty-fifth year of his age, and in the vigor of health, intellectually and physically. He was born in the County of Franklin, in the State of Pennsylvania, of honest and industrious parents, and may truly be called the architect of his own fortunes. Having received a good education, he studied the profession of the law, in the County of Lancaster, in the same State, which has ever since been his home. In 1814 and 1815 he was elected to the State Legislature, where he distinguished himself by those exhibitions of intellect which gave promise of future eminence. In his profession during many succeeding years, he rose to the highest class of legal minds, and at a period when Pennsylvania could boast of her Baldwins, her Gibsons, her Rosses, her Duncans, her Breckenridges, her Tilghmans, her Hopkinses, her Jenkinses, her Dallases, and her Semples, he was prepared for the struggles of the future, and soon became conspicuous among those who had but few equals

in their own times, and whose fame is still cherished among our most agreeable recollections.

At this day, after more than half a century's intercourse as man and boy with the people of his own immediate district, and with the people of Pennsylvania; after having figured prominently in the conflicts of parties; after having shared the confidence of successive Democratic administrations; after having contributed his energies to the overthrow of political heresies without number, he might leave his case to thousands and tens of thousands, who have at various times antagonized his opinions, but now, with the annals of his life before them, stand ready to pay their tribute to his consistency and to his integrity as a public man, by uniting with his political friends in placing him in the Presidential chair! What nobler monument could be raised in commemoration of any American patriot? What more significant refutation of all the accusations of heated party combatants? What more conclusive proof could be given to the nation at large of the fitness and the merits of a statesman who, after such a lifetime, finds his indorsers in the hearts of the people among whom he has always lived, and his warmest supporters among men who have for more than forty years stood in opposition to his opinions?

It is said that the grave covers all, that malignity halts at the portals of the tomb, and that from its peaceful bosom spring flowers of reconciliation and forgetfulness of all evil passions. Those who now mourn over the humble yet immortal grave of Jackson rarely think of the calumnies which pursued him like so many unsleeping furies during his lifetime. In the universal homage paid to his memory, which rises forever like incense to the skies, how seldom we recall the bitter epithets with which he was attacked during his illustrious career! And yet that he *was* attacked, and that he *was* persecuted almost beyond parallel, is so. But he outlived detraction, and long before he passed to his final account, most of his enemies were translated into friends. We may say of James Buchanan, that, although still in the strength of public usefulness, he too has outlived detraction, and that the echoes of slander which sound up from the deep oblivion to which the accusations upon his character have been consigned, fall faintly upon the ear of the present generation. In the long catalogue of his public services and private virtues, we lose sight of the false charge of the personal foe, in the luminous and splendid aggregate of the patriotic character which he would impugn!

In 1820, James Buchanan was elected to the House of Representatives, and retained his position in that body for ten years, voluntarily retiring after the first Congress under the administration of Andrew Jackson. He was the warm and ardent

defender of the administration of Mr. Monroe, the active opponent of the administration of John Quincy Adams, and the consistent and trusted friend of Andrew Jackson. The proceedings show that while he retained a seat in the popular branch of Congress, he took a prominent part in all the debates upon great public questions. As early as 1815, he entertained opinions hostile to the constitutionality of the Bank of the United States, and in the fierce struggles which ensued upon the election of the hero of New Orleans, he was a distinguished champion of the Democratic party.

Probably the most interesting part of Mr. Buchanan's history, was his early and effective support of General Jackson for the Presidency. He was one of the first advocates of the hero of New Orleans. More than thirty years ago, as a member of the House of Representatives of the United States, he was recognized as among the most active and devoted friends of Jackson. Distinguished for his eloquence and his judgment, even in that period of his life, he contributed greatly to produce the state of feeling which afterwards put General Jackson forward as the Democratic candidate,—Pennsylvania taking the lead. Before the House of Representatives of the United States proceeded to elect a President (the people having failed, in 1824, to make a choice), Mr. Buchanan opposed, with indignant eloquence, the motion to sit with closed doors while that duty was being discharged by the representatives of the American people. He said (February 2, 1825):

"He protested against going into a secret conclave, when the House should decide this all-important question.

"What are the consequences," said Mr. B., "which will result from closing the doors of the galleries? We should impart to the election an air of mystery. We should give exercise to the imaginations of the multitude, in conjecturing what scenes are enacted within this hall. Busy rumor, with her hundred tongues, will circulate reports of wicked combinations and corruptions, which have no existence. Let the people see what we are doing. Let them know that it is neither more nor less than putting our ballots into the boxes, and they will soon become satisfied with the spectacle and retire."

When the memorable struggle of 1828 came on, Mr. Buchanan was prominent in the contest. Indeed, he was so conspicuous that the opponents of Jackson bestowed a full share of the bitterness reserved for the old hero upon his efficient and faithful friend. Mr. Buchanan came into the House of Representatives for the last time in 1829. It was during this session that he displayed those eminent qualities which proved him to be one of the ablest constitutional lawyers in the country; and in a body of which such statesmen as McDuffie, Wickliffe, and others, were

members, Mr. Buchanan was selected as Chairman of the Committee of the Judiciary, a duty for which he had been well prepared in the debates which had taken place in former sessions, between Mr. Clay, Mr. Calhoun, Mr. Lowndes, Mr. Randolph, Mr. Buchanan himself, and others equally eminent. When the celebrated case of Judge Peck, of Missouri, came up before the House, Mr. Buchanan was the leading spirit in conducting the impeachment of that functionary. The House of Representatives, having heard the able arguments on both sides, decided to present to the Senate articles of impeachment against Judge Peck, and they elected by ballot (May 30, 1830), five managers to conduct the impeachment on the part of the House. They were, James Buchanan, of Pennsylvania, Henry R. Storrs, of New York, George McDuffie, of South Carolina, Ambrose Spencer, of New York, and Charles Wickliffe, of Kentucky. The display before the Senate on that celebrated trial, forms a most instructive page in history. Messrs. Wm. Wirt and Jonathan Meredith, appeared for Judge Peck, and on the part of the managers, Mr. Buchanan closed the argument in a speech of great length and profound ability and research. It is still quoted as one of the most masterly expositions of constitutional law on the public records.

After retiring from Congress in 1831, he received from General Jackson, unsolicited, the tender of the mission to Russia. He accepted that mission. How he discharged its grave duties, the archives of the legation and of the State Department, will show. Among other acts, he rendered the country important and valuable service, by negotiating the first commercial treaty between the United States and Russia, which secured to our commerce the ports of the Baltic and Black Sea, and insured to us a valuable and continually increasing trade. What reputation he left behind him, those who succeeded him are willing to attest. The chaste and manly tribute to his splendid abilities, at St. Petersburg, paid during the proceedings of the Convention, which assembled on the 4th of March, 1856, by his immediate successor in the American legation at that court, the Hon. William Wilkins, shows something of the habits and capacities of Mr. Buchanan.

Shortly after Mr. Buchanan's return from the Russian mission, the Democrats in the Legislature of Pennsylvania made him their candidate for the United States Senate, and elected him. He remained in the Senate from the 6th of December, 1834, until his resignation, March 3, 1845, having been twice re-elected during that period of time. It is not necessary to recapitulate the distinguished services rendered by our great statesman, in the highest legislative body on earth, so well and so widely are they remembered. In the debate on the admission of Arkansas and Michigan; in his opposition to the de-

signs of the abolitionists; in his resistance and exposure of the schemes of the Bank of the United States, after it had been transferred to Pennsylvania, as a vast political moneyed monopoly; in his opposition to a profuse expenditure of the public revenue, for the creation of an unnecessary public debt; a government bank of discount, circulation, and deposit, under the British name of Exchequer; a substitution of paper money for the constitutional currency of silver and gold; the surrender of M'Leod upon the insulting demand of England; the unjust distribution of the public revenue, to the States of this Confederation; in his courageous hostility to special legislation, no matter how concealed; he co-operated with Wright, Woodbury, Benton, King, Linn, and other leading Democrats of that day. As chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, during a series of years, in the Senate of the United States, he sustained the honor of the nation, by his unanswerable demonstration of the right of each State to punish a foreign murderer, who, in time of peace, kills an American citizen upon its own soil. His masterly expositions of our unquestionable title to the Northeast boundary line, were upheld by the decisions of Congress, and he won high honor for his opposition to a treaty which gave a large portion of the American territory to a foreign government. He was the advocate of a liberal and enlightened policy in regard to the public lands. During the memorable extra session of one hundred days, when the opponents of the Democracy, in the Senate of the United States, had resolved to push through a series of high federal measures, beginning with the Bank of the United States, and ending with the bankrupt law, Mr. Buchanan was constantly in his seat, and was frequently put forward as the leader of his party, in certain trying emergencies. An early and a fervent advocate of the annexation of Texas, he signalized his career in that body by giving his views on that important question to his countrymen, in a speech of unsurpassed ability and power.

It is hardly necessary to go over Mr. Buchanan's record, to show how true he has been on all those great questions involving the rights of the States and the rights of the citizens of the States. On those delicate questions which tried so many Northern men, and which lost to the Democratic party of the country some of its most prominent leaders, who would not follow the doctrine of state rights to its just and logical conclusion, Mr. Buchanan was found unwavering and decided. In the exciting debate during the Congress of 1836, on the subject of circulating incendiary documents through the mails of the United States, Mr. Buchanan spoke repeatedly in support of the Message of Mr. Van Buren, demanding the interference of the National Legislature to prevent the dissemination of appeals among the slaves of the South to rise in servile insurrection against the people of that quarter

of the country; and on the question of the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, Mr. Buchanan used the following emphatic language:

"What is now asked by these memorialists? That in this District of ten miles square—a District carved out of two slaveholding States, and surrounded by them on all sides, slavery shall be abolished! What would be the effects of granting their request? You would thus erect a citadel in the very hearts of these States, upon a territory which they have ceded to you for a far different purpose, from which abolitionists and incendiaries could securely attack the peace and safety of their citizens. You establish a spot within the slaveholding States which would be a city of refuge for runaway slaves. You create by law a central point from which trains of gunpowder may be securely laid, extending into the surrounding States, which may at any moment produce a fearful and destructive explosion. By passing such a a law, you introduce the enemy into the very bosom of these two States, and afford him every opportunity to produce a servile insurrection. Is there any reasonable man who can for one moment suppose that Virginia and Maryland would have ceded the District of Columbia to the United States, if they had entertained the slightest idea that Congress would ever use it for any such purpose? They ceded it for your use, for your convenience, and not for their own destruction. When slavery ceases to exist under the laws of Virginia and Maryland, then, and not till then, ought it to be abolished in the District of Columbia."

When, at the same session of Congress, the two bills were reported, admitting the territories of Michigan and Arkansas as States into the American Union, Mr. Buchanan was selected as the Northern Senator who should present the bill admitting Arkansas, and advocate it before the Senate, which he did with signal ability, and Mr. Benton was chosen as the Southern Senator who was to present and advocate the bill admitting Michigan into the Union. During the exciting debates on these issues, Mr. Buchanan spoke repeatedly. He took the broad ground that the people of the territory, having formed a Republican Constitution, after the model of the other States, could be and should be admitted into the Union irrespective of slavery, and that Congress could not and should not interfere to prevent their admission for any such reason as is now urged against the admission of Kansas. It was during the debate on the admission of Michigan that he used these memorable words, on the first of April, 1836, in his place as a Senator from Pennsylvania:

"*The older I grow, the more I am inclined to be what is called 'a state rights man.'* The peace and security of this Union depend upon giving to the Constitution a literal and fair construction, such as would be placed upon it by a plain, intelligent man,

and not by ingenious constructions, to increase the powers of this government, and thereby diminish those of the States. The rights of the States, reserved to them by that instrument, ought ever to be held sacred. If, then, the Constitution leaves to them to decide according to their own discretion, unrestricted and unlimited, who shall be electors, it follows as a necessary consequence that they may, if they think proper, confer upon resident aliens the right of voting," &c. &c.

And at the same time, in the very same speech from which the above is copied, he made the following eloquent allusion to the adopted citizens:

"The territory ceded by Virginia to the United States, was sufficiently extensive for an immense empire. The parties to this compact of cession contemplated that it would form five sovereign States of this Union. At that early period, we had just emerged from our revolutionary struggle, and none of the jealousy was then felt against foreigners, and particularly against Irish foreigners, which now appears to haunt some gentlemen. There had then been no attempts made to get up a Native American party in this country. The blood of the gallant Irish had flowed freely upon every battle-field, in defence of the liberties which we now enjoy. Besides, the Senate will well recollect that the ordinance was passed before the adoption of our present Constitution, and whilst the power of naturalization remained with the several States. In some, and perhaps, in all of them, it required so short a residence, and so little trouble to be changed from an alien to a citizen, that the process could be performed without the least difficulty. I repeat that no jealousy whatever then existed against foreigners."

After the splendid campaign of 1844, which resulted in the election of Mr. Polk, to which result Pennsylvania, led by James Buchanan, contributed her electoral vote, the President elect, casting his eye over the long roll of Democratic statesmen then living, weighing the claims and the qualifications of each and all, profoundly sensible of the exciting questions which must come up for adjustment during his administration, and after consulting the venerable sage then in the sunset of life in the shades of the Hermitage, invited Mr. Buchanan to accept the portfolio of the State department, the head of his cabinet; and in 1845, Mr. Buchanan resigned his seat in the Senate (to which he had only lately been re-elected), and became Secretary of State, under President Polk. Nor is it necessary that we should recapitulate his services in that department. They are fresh and familiar in all minds. His argument in favor of the clear and unquestionable title of the American people, to all Oregon, won for him the applause of the whole liberal world, and was published in several languages in Europe. The State

papers, on other great questions, proceeding from his pen during the four years he remained in the department of State, were so many contributions to the column which celebrates his eminent fitness, and his unsullied integrity. When the Wilmot Proviso was introduced into Congress, it was James Buchanan who at once denounced, and exposed, and rallied the democracy against it.

It was during the administration of Mr. Polk, that Mr. Buchanan, in his letter to the Democracy of Berks County, Pennsylvania, first recommended to the North and the South, that the Missouri line should be extended to the Pacific, and that this should be made the basis of a final settlement of the slavery question in the territories. The war with Mexico, consequent on the annexation of Texas, gave us a vast empire in addition to the area which constitutes our beloved Union, and in the arguments growing out of the acquisition of California, Mr. Buchanan labored earnestly and effectively on the side of progress. Mr. Buchanan's letter on this subject is of record, and speaks for itself. It is easy to recall the vituperation which his proposition to extend the Missouri line called forth from the fanatics of the North, from those who now clamor for its restoration, and who in insane forgetfulness of their hostility to it a few years ago, set themselves up as its peculiar champions.

Mr. Buchanan's recommendation of an *extension* of the Missouri line was far in advance of public sentiment. It was hailed in the South by all parties as an exhibition of firmness only too rare in those days among Northern men, and it was appreciated by the truly national men of the free States. Would it not be strangely unjust, if this proposal of Mr. Buchanan should now be cited to prove him unsound upon existing issues? The spirit which actuated Mr. Buchanan in 1847, when he wrote his letter recommending the extension of the Missouri line, was to promote harmony among the States of this Union, by recognizing the principle of equality among the States, in regard to the common territories of the people; and now, when the Missouri line has been superseded by another plan of settlement, the Nebraska-Kansas Act, based upon the same sentiment of State equality, all patriotic men will cheerfully abide by and vigilantly maintain it against the inroads of that abolition fusion which once more threatens to assail the constitutional rights of the South. The country will find, among its public men, no truer or firmer advocate and defender of the great principle of popular sovereignty, as embodied in the Nebraska bill, than James Buchanan.

Mr. Buchanan remained in connection with Mr. Polk's administration until March 4th, 1849, when he once more returned to Pennsylvania, and from that period up to the election of the present enlightened Chief Magistrate, he engaged himself in pursuits congenial to a statesman of large and ex-

tended experience. The conflict between the enemies of the Constitution and the Democracy, did not find him an idle spectator. He was in the fore front of the Democratic party, demanding for the South no hollow and hypocritical platform, but a broad, radical, distinct recognition of those rights, which cannot be equal, unless they are shared honestly and fairly between the people of all the sections of the Union. Everywhere, the Democracy of his State felt and followed his wise and patriotic counsels. Whenever he emerged from his quiet home, it was to demand the recognition of all the guarantees of the Constitution to all the States. His letters and speeches in favor of the enforcement of the fugitive slave law—in favor of the repeal of the laws of Pennsylvania, enacted for the purpose of depriving the Southern citizen of the use of our jails for the safe-keeping of his fugitives, and his appeals to the Democracy of the State never to yield to sectionalism, conclusively show that he had not forgotten his duty to great principles, and that his attention was constantly fixed upon the importance of discharging that obligation. He was as vigilant in his duties as a private in the ranks of the people, as he was prominent as a counsellor in the Cabinet and as a representative and senator in Congress.

During the Presidential contest in 1852, Mr. Buchanan stood in the van of the Democratic ranks. The following remarkable passages from his speech delivered to a mass meeting of the Democracy of Western Pennsylvania, on the 7th of October, 1852, at Greensburg, Westmoreland County, are so characteristic of the man and his opinions that we do not hesitate to copy them. Remember that, at no time did he ever yield a jot or tittle to sectionalism. He was against it instinctively, and from the start. He said:

"From my soul, I abhor the practice of mingling up religion with politics. The doctrine of all our constitutions, both Federal and State, is, that every man has an indefeasible right to worship his God according to the dictates of his own conscience. He is both a bigot and a tyrant, who would interfere with that sacred right. When a candidate is before the people for office, the inquiry ought never even to be made, what form of religious faith he professes; but only, in the language of Mr. Jefferson, 'Is he honest, is he capable?'

"'Democratic Americans!' What a name for a Native American party! When all the records of our past history prove that American Democrats have ever opened wide their arms to receive foreigners flying from oppression in their native land, and have always bestowed upon them the rights of American citizens, after a brief period of residence in this country. The Democratic party have always gloried in this policy, and its fruits have been to increase our population and our power, with unex-

ampled rapidity, and to furnish our country with vast numbers of industrious, patriotic and useful citizens. Surely the name of 'Democratic Americans' was an unfortunate designation for the Native American party.

"The Native American party, an 'American excellence,' and the glory of its foundership, belongs to George Washington! No, fellow-citizens, the American people will rise up with one accord to vindicate the memory of that illustrious man from such an imputation. As long as the recent memory of our revolutionary struggle remained vividly impressed on the hearts of our countrymen, no such party could have ever existed. The recollection of Montgomery, La Fayette, De Kalb, Kosciusco, and a long list of foreigners, both officers and soldiers, who freely shed their blood to secure our liberties, would have rendered such ingratitude impossible. Our revolutionary army was filled with the brave and patriotic natives of their lands; and George Washington was their commander-in-chief. Would he have ever closed the door against the admission of foreigners to the rights of American citizens? Let his acts speak for themselves. So early as the 26th of March, 1790, General Washington, as President of the United States, approved the first law which ever passed Congress on the subject of naturalization; and this only required a residence of two years, previous to the adoption of a foreigner as an American citizen. On the 29th January, 1795, the term of residence was extended by Congress to five years, and thus it remained throughout General Washington's administration, and until after the accession of John Adams to the Presidency. In his administration, which will ever be known in history as the reign of terror, as the era of alien and sedition laws, an Act was passed on the 18th of June, 1798, which prohibited any foreigner from becoming a citizen until after a residence of fourteen years, and this is the law, or else, perpetual exclusion, which General Scott preferred, and which the Native American party now desire to restore.

"The Presidential election of 1800 secured the ascendency of the Democratic party, and under the administration of Thomas Jefferson, its great apostle, on the 14th of April, 1802, the term of residence previous to naturalization, was restored to five years, what it had been under General Washington, and where it has ever since remained. No, fellow-citizens, the father of his country was never a Native American. This 'American excellence' never belonged to him."

"The Fugitive Slave Law is all the South has obtained in this compromise of 1850. It is a law founded both upon the letter and the spirit of the Constitution, and a similar law has existed on our statute books ever since the administration of George Washington. History teaches us that but for the provision in favor of fugitive

slaves, our present Constitution never would have existed. Think ye that the South will ever tamely surrender the fugitive slave law to northern fanatics and abolitionists?

"And now, fellow-citizens, what a glorious party the Democratic party has ever been! Man is but the being of a summer's day, whilst principles are eternal. The generations of mortals, one after the other, rise and sink, and are forgotten, but the principles of Democracy, which we have inherited from our revolutionary fathers, will endure to bless mankind throughout all generations. Is there any Democrat within the sound of my voice, is there any Democrat throughout the broad limits of good and great old Democratic Pennsylvania, who will abandon these sacred principles for the sake of following in the train of a military conqueror, and shouting for the hero of Lundy's Lane, Cerro Gordo, and Chapultepec."

And when the campaign resulted in triumph, President Pierce tendered to Mr. Buchanan the leading foreign mission, which was accepted. Circumstances have transpired, within the last few years, to make the American mission to the Court of St. James singularly important, and it has happened that during Mr. Buchanan's stay in London, several great questions of a vexatious and complicated character have disturbed the intercourse between the two countries. However important to both the cultivation of continued peace and good will, the fact that Great Britain sees our growing progress with jealousy and alarm, and the fact that we behold her *pragmatical* interference upon this continent wherever an opportunity is presented to her, with indignation, render our relations with Great Britain of the most delicate character. The very intimacy of our business connections, constituting, as it does, the real cord which binds us together, is apt, moreover, to come in conflict with political considerations, and the commercial attrition, so to speak, throws into dangerous neighborhood English ambition on the one hand and American progress on the other. It has become proverbial that the selection of a wise, able and experienced man to represent the United States at the British Court, is one of the first duties of an executive, hardly secondary to the selection of its own chief cabinet ministers, because the English mission is always intensely important to the immediate interests of our people. During the trying time of Mr. Buchanan's mission, the whole nation seem to have become impressed with the importance and justice of these observations. They felt that in the American minister they had a man upon whose safe character and wise counsels they could confidently lean. Their eyes were constantly fixed upon him. Every steamer brought news occasioning the greatest anxiety to the commercial and other classes. On more than one occasion collision seemed to be inevitable, but every panic passed off.

The correspondence of Mr. Buchanan, such of it as has been published, exhibits on his part a vigilance, a discretion, an industry, and at the same time a dignity of character, that have made his name a favorite name in every section of our beloved Union. In the later troubles which have given rise to so much excitement and discussion in Congress and the country, Mr. Buchanan has towered in all the dignity of his high character and intellectual superiority. He will leave his post to give way to his successor, having established renewed kind relations between the two countries, and having fixed upon the hearts of the English people the impress of a republican character, which has never, for a single moment, yielded its simplicity and its truth to aristocratic blandishments. Courted and flattered during his stay, he studiously abstained from paying tribute to English vanity. In all circles, and on all occasions, he displayed his American dignity and his American patriotism. Never gratuitously obtruding his country and her advantages, he never hesitated to speak of her as a son speaking of his parent; nor was he ever actuated by any spirit of offensive partisanship. As he came so he goes, the same plain, untitled, unpretending American citizen. The highest classes vied with each other to do him honor; and on a recent occasion, when the news of a threatened collision between the two countries alarmed the people of both, his presence among the populace of London was greeted with cheers, an evidence that, however parties may intrigue, one honest, straightforward patriot is sure to hold a high place in the affections of the masses.

One great reason why Mr. Buchanan's name is at this moment so acceptable to his countrymen is, because he stands before them, not merely as an eminently capable, but as *an eminently safe man*. In the growing greatness of our republic, its increasing importance, commercially and politically, its extended and extending relations with other powers, not to speak of the efforts of reckless agitators against the Constitution and all the securities and guarantees of our domestic safety and tranquillity, we see the evidences that such a man would be able to confer signal benefits upon the American people in the Presidential Chair. For the first time in many years we behold in the person of James Buchanan, a statesman who combines the rare quality of having been among the very first, in every emergency, to take the most progressive view of every great question, and yet of being able to preserve, in the midst of such emergencies, the bearing, and to exercise the influence, of a sagacious and well-poised democratic statesman. It is this combination of elements which has awakened in his behalf the favorable sentiment of those classes of citizens who look for a wise and judicious administration of the federal government, and which has also gathered

around him the warm and generous sympathies of the constituents who confide in his progressive instincts, as illustrated through all his long and illustrious career.

There is not now to be found a reasonable man in any part of the Union, who does not believe that Mr. Buchanan's nomination would be succeeded by his certain and triumphant election. To the South he presents no record inconsistent, even in the slightest degree, with that which induced the southern delegates to vote for him so long and so steadily in the Democratic Convention of 1852. Now, as then, he stands forth the uncompromising enemy of their enemies; the devoted advocate of their constitutional rights. To the Northwestern States he presents the unsullied record of one who has co-operated with their own pioneer representatives in Congress, in opening up our new territories to commerce and to civilization. The Northern or Eastern States know him as the champion of their rights, when these were sacrificed to British rapacity. While in the Middle States it may be proudly said of Mr. Buchanan, with no disrespect to other candidates, that he is this day regarded as the very strongest man whom the Democratic party could nominate for the Presidency. The divided household of our political friends in New York would, we believe, find in his name, the olive branch of harmony and peace; the Democrats of Ohio would, under his banner, advance to that victory which their patriotic efforts so well deserve; and Pennsylvania, standing between these two gigantic states, would pronounce for such a candidate, with such a majority as would recall the days when these three commonwealths constituted the very fortress of the Democratic party in the free States.

During Mr. Buchanan's absence of nearly three years, while politics raged at home, he proudly abstained from interfering with the struggle for the Presidential succession. From the time he set foot on English soil, he wrote back to his friends, that in no contingency would he place himself in the field as a candidate for the Presidency. There was nothing of grief in this resolve, nothing of disappointed ambition. It was the calm and deliberate judgment of a mind, which, having looked carefully over the political past and future, had come to the conclusion that the day for the scramble for Presidential honors had passed away—at least with him—and that he was determined to apply himself to other pursuits. We assert, that, if every private letter, written from London since his absence, by James Buchanan, in the unsuspecting confidence of his heart, should now be published, and laid before the American people, there would not be found one line, no, not one syllable, manifesting a desire for the nomination of the Democratic Convention, or suggesting any way by which it might be obtained by himself. Even since he has become formidable as a candidate, his letters are

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animated by the same generous spirit. And the very fact, that he has taken this course, from a conscientious belief that it would be out of place for him to struggle for the nomination, has made him acceptable to the masses in every part of our country. Absent he is, it is true, but his image is before their eyes wherever they go. In distant lands, it is true, but his counsels have been felt as if he were present among us. Contending with the giants of foreign diplomacy, it is true, but the thoughts and the words he left behind him, are his living representatives. The people will judge of him by the record, by the even tenor of his life, by the spotless purity of his character, by his undaunted patriotism, and by the trophies with which he returns to his native shores, to be crowned, as we confidently hope, with the highest honors of the Republic.

JOHN W. FORNEY,
Chairman of the State Central Committee.

GIDEON G. WESTCOTT,
ISAAC G. M'KINLEY,
Secretaries.
GEORGE PLITT,
Treasurer.

PHILADELPHIA, April, 1856.